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# Crisis at Little Rock: Eisenhower, History, and Mediated Political Realities

Steven R. Goldzwig

*Marquette University*, [steven.goldzwig@marquette.edu](mailto:steven.goldzwig@marquette.edu)

George N. Dionisopoulos

*San Diego State University*

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Steven R.  
Goldzwig and  
George N.  
Dionisopoulos

# Crisis at Little Rock

## *Eisenhower, History, and Mediated Political Realities*

Presidential rhetoric attending U.S. foreign policy crises has received a good deal of scholarly attention. Fewer studies have focused on domestic policy crisis.<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that domestic division over civil rights has given the contemporary presidency one of its most thorny, if not recalcitrant domestic concerns. Presidential discourse intended to resolve crisis in the civil rights arena is never without rhetorical constraints; these limitations remind us of the tendency of public presidential address to reverberate in various sectors of the nation with differing consequences for each.

In the age of televised and print-mediated reality, the echoes of presidential discourse resound in sometimes unexpected and usually wholly fragmented tidbits, creating afterimages and impressions capable of overpowering any clear description of original intent. A study of domestic presidential crisis rhetoric in the age of mass-mediated reality invites a focus on the responses of mass opinion leaders that create the "crisis" label and establish its "resolution." The fundamental negotiation of a civil rights "crisis," then, also invites an investigation into mediated responses.

A recent critique argues, however, that merely examining the interpretive processes of audience members in the act of decoding mediated texts is not enough. As Kevin Carragee observes, "[i]nterpretive mass communication research has failed to place media texts and media audiences within meaningful historical, social, and cultural contexts."<sup>2</sup> This essay adopts a strategy to correct this oversight. We believe a focus on media coverage alone will yield a truncated view of history and, simultaneously, that a pure focus on the historical "record" cannot fully reflect history as experienced through the mediated coverage that is also part of the ongoing cultural milieu.

Kathleen J. Turner argues that the study and the processes of history are essentially rhetorical in nature and function. Accordingly, Turner believes "we need both rhetorical criticism's message-centered focus and rhetorical history's contextual construction." Moreover, "the melding of historical and rhetorical methodologies can contribute to an understanding of the complex latitudinal and longitudinal processes of symbolic influence."<sup>3</sup> In this essay, we adopt both

historical and critical methods in an effort to demonstrate how the history and mediated coverage of a contemporary domestic crisis can be mutually informative. By outlining the rhetorical norms, strategies, and constraints involved in a print-mediated crisis and by supplementing it with historical investigation, we hope to create a richer understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of the mass media, as well as highlight the historical and cultural legacy of that experience. In Turner's phraseology, both the latitudinal and longitudinal aspects of rhetorical history will constitute our primary subject matter. In particular we focus on mediated coverage of President Eisenhower's handling of the Little Rock, Arkansas, school desegregation crisis of 1957.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The desegregation crisis at Little Rock's Central High School, precipitated by the 1954 *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision, provided President Eisenhower "with the most persistent and critical domestic challenge of his eight-year presidency."<sup>4</sup> The civil rights issue was particularly vexing to Eisenhower because of a number of factors including the president's: (1) personal philosophy and temperament; (2) view of the role, powers, and function of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government; (3) fear that the implementation of the *Brown* decision would precipitate federal-state rancor and division, creating a constitutional crisis; (4) own regard for and political relationship with the South.

### *Personal Philosophy and Temperament*

According to Robert Fredrick Burk, Eisenhower was ill at ease about racial matters. He preferred a moderate approach rather than the "bully pulpit." His belief in "free enterprise" caused "revulsion at any form of 'coercive' federal regulation."<sup>5</sup> By temperament, Eisenhower's philosophy of government was to find a "middle way"; he made an effort to avoid and discount extremes "on both sides." Moreover, "Eisenhower was utterly convinced of the superiority of this approach."<sup>6</sup> In a cabinet meeting of March 1956, in response to a cabinet paper circulated by Attorney General Herbert Brownell that outlined suggestions on civil rights legislation, the president observed:

I believe that Herb Brownell should put forward what he has got here, but with a statement that many Americans understandably are separated by deep emotions on this subject. One of the prime reasons for this is that, after all, another system was upheld by the Supreme Court for 60 years. These people in the South were not breaking the law for the past 60 years, but, ever since

the "separate but equal" decision, they have been obeying the Constitution of the United States. Now we cannot erase the emotions of three generations just overnight. . . . People have a right to disagree with the Supreme Court decision—since the Supreme Court has disagreed with its own decision of 60 years standing—but, of course, the new decision should now be carried out.<sup>7</sup>

Eisenhower adopted a narrow definition of how constitutional law should be enforced and, as a result, critics felt that he was somewhat ambivalent, if not opposed, to a vigorous fight for black civil rights.<sup>8</sup>

### *Attitudes Toward the Coordinate Branches*

Eisenhower believed in limited government. He felt that law was not the ultimate solution to moral turpitude. When faced with any crisis, he had developed a "personal habit of caution" and, not surprisingly, this led him to "moderation in the exercise of presidential powers."<sup>9</sup> He preferred to address racial issues at a cabinet or subcabinet level. When he talked of racial equality it was through the "occasional assertion of democratic principles. At the same time the [p]resident carefully circumscribed his subordinates' activities to areas of clear federal jurisdiction, greatest international propaganda value, and minimum risk of political fallout or domestic unrest."<sup>10</sup> His ideology actually was translated into careful, jurisdictionally controlled federal efforts such as desegregating the military and schools on army posts.

Eisenhower opposed an active judiciary in areas such as public school desegregation because he believed that in the South, in particular, such activism threatened state support for public schools.<sup>11</sup> He felt that the *Brown* decisions of 1954 and 1955 had made the executive's job more burdensome. In a private letter to his friend "Swede" Hazlett, Eisenhower lamented: "I think that no single event has so disturbed the domestic scene in many years as did the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 in the school desegregation case. That decision and similar ones earlier and later in point of time have interpreted the Constitution in such a fashion as to put heavier responsibilities than before on the Federal government in the matter of assuring each citizen his guaranteed constitutional rights." Yet Eisenhower would also adamantly maintain: "There must be respect for the Constitution—which means the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution—or we shall have chaos. . . . This I believe with all my heart—and shall always act accordingly."<sup>12</sup>

Eisenhower was especially uneasy with post-*Brown* implementation decisions on behalf of desegregation, fearing that forced efforts would result in the complete federal assumption of public education, a prospect the president reportedly abhorred.<sup>13</sup> In a letter to Governor James F. Byrnes of South Carolina, Eisenhower described his concerns regarding executive action pertaining to *Brown*: "It was my purpose . . . to provide a moderate approach to a

difficult problem and to make haste slowly in seeking to meet it. I believe that in the question under discussion there are moral values as well as legal requirements to be considered; moreover, I am aware that emotions are deeply stirred on both sides."<sup>14</sup> In a personal letter to George Landes dated 12 September 1957, Eisenhower also wrote: "The fact is that many states are stoutly opposed to any entry of the Federal Government into school affairs, maintaining that the final result would be Federal control of education. This, of course, would be a calamity. . . . [I]t is clear that primary responsibility for the schools in our country properly devolves upon local and state authorities."<sup>15</sup> Thus Eisenhower championed local, gradual efforts at desegregating the schools and this gradualism was of some comfort to Southern segregationists. It also caused much discomfiture for civil rights advocates.

### *Federal-State Relations and Constitutional Crisis*

Eisenhower once privately told Governor Byrnes of South Carolina that

improvement in race relations . . . will be healthy and sound only if it starts locally. I do not believe prejudice . . . will succumb to compulsion. Consequently, I believe that federal law imposed upon our states in such a way as to bring about a conflict of the police power of the states and the nation, would set back the cause of progress in race relations for a long, long time.<sup>16</sup>

This fear was in part responsible for increasing tension between the executive and judicial branches regarding "appropriate" action in response to *Brown* and subsequent implementation of desegregation plans for public schools. When Attorney General Herbert Brownell was asked by the Supreme Court to file an *amicus curiae* brief regarding the *Brown* case, Eisenhower questioned the Justice Department's authority to "speak out on state-enforced segregation." Moreover, Eisenhower's belief in the separation of powers among the three branches of government continuously led him to refuse comment on any Supreme Court ruling. The president believed that commentary on any case would be an open invitation to comment on each one—something he wanted to avoid. His consistent position in this regard was that of "executive neutrality."<sup>17</sup>

Eisenhower was equally cautious regarding implementation of the *Brown* decision.<sup>18</sup> In a brief filed 11 April 1955, the Eisenhower administration advocated a "middle-of-the-road concept of moderation with a degree of fairness" that left implementation of desegregation plans to the federal district courts who were to be given power to approve or deny local desegregation plans.<sup>19</sup> The Supreme Court followed this approach in its implementation decision of 24 May 1955. Such plans were to be accomplished with "all deliberate speed." But it was questionable as to how federal district judges in the South would interpret that particular directive.

In addition, the president was quite concerned that local police powers be given every opportunity to restore law and order in the event that violence attended attempted enforcement. The idea of federal troops occupying Southern states evoked grim images of Reconstruction, the negative history and outcome of which Eisenhower adamantly preferred to avoid during his administration. It remained unclear, however, as to how the administration would respond to violent segregationist obstruction. Mob violence in Texarkana and Mansfield, Texas, as well as in Clinton, Tennessee in 1956 did little to reassure civil rights advocates that both their rights and their safety would be protected by federal intervention. In response to such incidents, the president would take the position that "Under the law the federal government cannot . . . move into a state until the state is not able to handle the matter."<sup>20</sup> Exactly when and under what circumstances federal intervention would occur remained decidedly vague. At the 1956 Republican National Convention in San Francisco, Eisenhower personally squelched efforts to strengthen the party's desegregation plan and complained privately that the Supreme Court was moving too fast and excoriated it for its "stupidity."<sup>21</sup> The furor refused to abate. Circumstances were afoot that would throw the president headlong into a cauldron of constitutional crisis at Little Rock.

For a time, Eisenhower also seemed reticent to introduce legislation in the civil rights arena, preferring voluntary to compulsory efforts. Because of his moderate stance, legislative proposals were left to "languish in the Congress."<sup>22</sup> An "emasculated version" of a civil rights bill actually was passed by Congress in 1957; less than one month later, the Little Rock crisis began.<sup>23</sup>

### *Political Relations with the South*

It was of no little consequence that many of the positions outlined above were also based on Eisenhower's belief that a strong anti-segregationist stance would ultimately "defeat forever the possibility of developing a viable Republican Party in the South."<sup>24</sup> This belief no doubt provided a rather striking rationale for Eisenhower's cautious approach to the question of school desegregation. Moreover, Eisenhower had spent a good deal of time in the South and was sensitive to southern history and sensibilities. The moderate position seemed principled and reasonable to Eisenhower, but it also, at times, played into the hands of segregationists who were intent upon obstructing any form of integration. Eisenhower continued to view "extremists" with suspicion, whether they were from the White Citizen's Councils or the NAACP. J. Edgar Hoover's ongoing updates on both groups increasingly gave the president little comfort. Events in Little Rock, Arkansas, during September 1957, could not help but add to the president's discomfiture. A true political media extravaganza was in the offing.



## MEDIATED POLITICAL REALITIES

According to Murray Edelman, "Political leaders become signs of competence, evil, nationalism, future promise, and other virtues and vices and so help introduce meaning to a confusing political world."<sup>25</sup> It was just such a world that the average American encountered in the morning newspaper on 25 September 1957. The day before, Dwight David Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and brought in paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division to enforce the court-ordered desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School. President Eisenhower and Governor Orval Eugene Faubus became key political antagonists in a dramatic exchange. Tension was symbolically created not only in the authorization of federal troops to quell unrest in the state of Arkansas, evoking negative images of Reconstruction with its attendant federal-state clashes, but also in the mediated clash of wills between the president and the chief executive of the state. That mediated reality, in turn, presents a unique opportunity to examine a modern political spectacle.

"Mediated, secondhand reality is our politics," according to Dan Nimmo and James Combs, "and there is little we can do about it."<sup>26</sup> Edelman maintains that

News . . . is not so much a description of events as a catalyst of political support and opposition in the light of the spectator's sensitivities, areas of ignorance, and ideological stance. The acceptance of a story plot that defines the background of a reported development and its future consequences is crucial. The scenarios for the future that news accounts evoke are rarely acted out according to their scripts. They are aborted or replaced by alternative scenarios implicit in later news accounts, but before that happens they influence political support and action. In this light, politics consists of a panoply of overlapping and conflicting spectacles that fade from the scene as they give birth to their successors.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, "News of controversial issues keeps tensions between groups alive or intensifies or broadens them."<sup>28</sup> Exposure to the ambiguities and controversies of the news not only defines our images of the political world but also our self-images. Audiences interpret news interpretations against their own background, experience, and ideology and what plays itself out in newspaper or magazine accounts is a dramaturgical dance of both self and political society.

We will maintain that print-mediated accounts of the crisis at Little Rock unfolded in three acts. The changing scenarios within each act were crucial to audience interpretation and provide a centerpiece for our analysis of mediated responses. In particular, we will argue that these mediated responses helped shape the short-term political, historical, and cultural consciousness. As the characteristic themes of each scene burned brightly and then, in turn, faded out, we find an interesting, if not provocative, political spectacle. For Edelman,

then, "[t]he political spectacle. . . evokes a drama that objectifies hopes and fears" but probably resolves very few of them.<sup>29</sup>

Nimmo and Combs also note that mediated political realities have a "melodramatic imperative." The key to melodrama is to mount a series of scenic environments wherein moral justice is on trial. More than merely identifying heroes and villains, melodramatic imperatives require suspense to maintain audience interest and, as such, evoke both quiescence and arousal in audiences. Danger, threat, narrow escapes, heroic and villainous action, and reward and punishment for good and evil are staples of the genre; news narratives are often constrained to both create and follow these imperatives. While happy endings may be useful, they are not essential; sometimes full resolution is simply not a realistic option. The content and structure of mediated political reality is a joint product of audience expectations and media attempts to fulfill them.<sup>30</sup> We believe that the news sources' and audiences' sense of melodrama is particularly heightened when events, personages, and mediated behaviors are also saddled with the label, "crisis."

## CRISIS AT LITTLE ROCK

Following the Supreme Court's integration rulings of 1954 and 1955, the Little Rock School Board, at the direction of Superintendent Virgil T. Blossom, drew up plans for the gradual integration of the public school system in Little Rock. This was a three-phase plan in which the high schools would be integrated by 3 September 1957, at the start of the school year. According to Daisy Bates, a member of the NAACP in Little Rock, the city "had apparently accepted the board's plans; and there seemed little reason to expect serious opposition, much less what followed."<sup>31</sup> What followed was perceived by some as the most serious challenge to federal authority since the Civil War. Enacted on a daily basis in a mediated environment, the rhetorical characteristics of this particular drama unfolded in three acts.

### *Act One*

Act One of the mediated narrative began on 2 September when the engaged public was informed that tensions of high national interest were percolating precariously in Arkansas. The audience was given a brief précis of the plot, the location, and the cast of characters crucial to unfolding events.

### *The Plot Unfolds*

The "action line" of the plot was presented in a direct, straightforward manner. Under the Little Rock School Board desegregation plan, the first school to



be integrated was Central High School. A series of legal challenges by various groups such as the segregationist Capital Citizens Council resulted in a ruling by a Federal District Court that the integration of Little Rock's public education facilities had to begin with the start of the 1957 school year.

On 2 September 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus activated the state's National Guard and placed it at Little Rock's Central High School. The "270 armed Arkansas militia and fifty members of the state police patrolled the school grounds and stood guard at all the entrances," charged by the governor to prevent any outbreak of violence that might accompany the integration of Little Rock's public schools.<sup>32</sup>

That night, at 10:05 p.m., Faubus addressed the people of Arkansas from the studios of station KTHV. According to the governor, since "a federal court has ruled that no further litigation is possible before the forcible integration of Negroes and whites in Central High School tomorrow, the evidence of discord, anger and resentment has come to me from so many sources as to become a deluge." As the governor described it, Little Rock was a city "on the brink of a riot [while] outraged white mothers . . . prepared to march on the school at 6 a.m.; caravans of indignant white citizens . . . converg[ed] on Little Rock from all over Arkansas. And Little Rock stores . . . were selling out of knives."<sup>33</sup>

Given these circumstances, the governor argued, "it [was] necessary to summon the Guard in advance of the school's opening to forestall violence."<sup>34</sup> Faubus explained that the mobilized National Guard at Central High School would serve neither as "segregationists nor integrationists, but as soldiers. . . carry[ing] out their assigned tasks:"<sup>35</sup> to "maintain or restore the peace and good order of this community."<sup>36</sup> Faubus refused to say "whether the troops were called out to prevent Negroes from entering the school," but he warned that "if any Negro tried to enter [Central High] violence would break out . . . and he was against violence."<sup>37</sup>

On 3 September, the opening day of school, "peace" was maintained when the Little Rock Board of Education urged the nine black students selected to integrate Central High School to stay home, and nineteen hundred white students entered the school "through a cordon of several hundred Guardsmen armed with carbines and billy clubs."<sup>38</sup> The Board of Education went to the U.S. District Court to ask Judge Ronald Davies to clarify the issue. After a four-minute hearing, Judge Davies ruled that integration at Central High School must "begin forthwith."<sup>39</sup> Worried about the safety of the nine black students, members of the Little Rock NAACP arranged a police escort for the next morning. But Daisy Bates was told by a police officer that city police could not escort the students up to Central High because the "school is off limits to the city police while it's 'occupied' by the Arkansas National Guardsmen"<sup>40</sup>

Eight of the nine black students were told to meet the escort of police and ministers from the Interracial Ministerial Alliance at 8:30 on the morning of 4

September. The ninth student, fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, was not contacted and the next morning she attempted to enter Central High School alone. When she approached the entrance "she found a youth, barely older than she, in the uniform of the National Guard, barring her way,"<sup>41</sup> and the drama was underway.

Thus, during act one the basic facts of the plot line were presented in a fairly concise, straightforward manner. The sitting governor of a state had issued an order to the National Guard to "keep the peace" in Little Rock. The order prevented the court-ordered integration of Central High School. As the *Arkansas Gazette* observed, when the Arkansas National Guard carried out the orders of Governor Faubus and blocked the entrance of Elizabeth Eckford to Central High School, the issue was "no longer segregation vs. integration. The question has now become the supremacy of the United States Government in all matters of law."<sup>42</sup> As Attorney General Herbert Brownell put the matter in a summary statement to the president, "no effort whatever had been made by the Governor of Arkansas to use his powers to uphold the jurisdiction of the federal court and to aid, rather than subvert, the execution of its orders. On the contrary, his purpose seemed clearly directed toward a nullification of the court's mandate."<sup>43</sup>

### Momentous, Historic Conflict, or Potential Crisis

The opening act of the mediated drama of Little Rock suggested that the events being played out in Arkansas were part of a much larger issue, an issue of possible historic significance. As *Time* observed, "Through the U.S. South ran the sight and sound, the pain and glory of historic sociological change. . . . As is often the case in such moments of history, the worst and the best in man—hate and human charity, stupidity and wisdom—came out before the world."<sup>44</sup> Events in Little Rock, reportedly "the first time that the issue of Federal versus state authority has been reached on the integration problem," now "set the stage for the first major test of the United State Supreme Court's decision of May 1954, that racial segregation in schools is unconstitutional."<sup>45</sup>

Early on then, the news media pegged the issue in Arkansas as an important "constitutional question"<sup>46</sup> that had "agitated constitutional lawyers since the earliest days of the Republic. . . . Where does the Federal authority end, and where do states' rights begin?"<sup>47</sup> The *Arkansas Gazette* observed:

Until last Thursday the matter of gradual limited integration in the Little Rock schools was a local problem which had been well and wisely handled by responsible local officials who have had—and we believe still have—the support of a majority of the people of this city. On that day Mr. Faubus appeared in Chancery Court on behalf of a small but militant minority and chose to

make it a state problem. On Monday night he called out the National Guard and made it a national problem.<sup>48</sup>

News coverage seemed to underscore a feeling of unexpectedness—that somehow this historic drama should not have taken place at this location involving these characters. The stage for mediated melodrama was set. Arkansas was not really a part of the Deep South but was, instead, “on the periphery of the die-hard states” with their strategy of “all-out resistance to school desegregation.”<sup>49</sup> The Arkansas State Board of Education had already integrated the seven state colleges and the University of Arkansas had admitted blacks into the graduate school as early as 1948.<sup>50</sup> The state did “not have a record of racial violence;” in fact, during the “very week that Little Rock was supposed to explode, three other Arkansas communities—Ozark, Fort Smith and Van Buren—integrated without a murmur. . . . [B]us integration [wa]s a statewide fact, and Little Rock’s white and Negro citizens ha[d] become accustomed to their Negro policemen.”<sup>51</sup> In Little Rock itself the “consensus among responsible citizens was that while integration of public schools was not popular, it was nonetheless inevitable.” Most “civic, religious, educational and business leaders supported the Little Rock Board of Education’s decision to carry out the integration order.”<sup>52</sup> Yet, the Supreme Court’s decision mandating school integration was “unexpectedly getting its first major test” in Little Rock, Arkansas.<sup>53</sup>

### Vivid Characterization and Lengthy Rationales for Mysterious Action

That same element of surprise also seemed to permeate the mediated development of the most interesting character in this phase of the drama—Arkansas Governor Orval Eugene Faubus. As constructed in the media, his contradictory persona mysteriously lacked a history of deep ideological conviction to motivate his action in Little Rock.

Both *Time* and *Newsweek* ran profiles of the governor. While each differed regarding Faubus’s exact place of birth, they did agree on his bucolic origins. Under the title “Hillbilly, Slightly Sophisticated,” *Time* noted that in his first term Faubus had been an “Arkansas-style progressive.” He was a “product of the hill country;” born “so far back in the Ozarks of Northwest Arkansas that the first paved road to the outside world was not completed until 1949.” This article highlighted the fact that there were few blacks in this area of Arkansas and Faubus had “no background of race prejudice.”<sup>54</sup> *Newsweek* crafted Faubus’s characterization by noting that “Of all the South’s governors, Orval Eugene Faubus of Arkansas might seem the least likely to set himself against the power of President Eisenhower and the Federal government over the issue of school integration.” He was born “so deep in the Ozark hills that a man might pass a lifetime there without ever seeing a Negro.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the *New*

*York Times* said that Faubus appeared "from his record to be the least likely of all the Southern Governors to volunteer for a leading role in the school integration showdown."<sup>56</sup> In background stories about the crisis, the *Times* referred to the Governor as "a Democrat with a liberal background."<sup>57</sup> The Faubus "turnabout" was described as being "so abrupt that no one had anticipated it. For weeks, Gov. Orval Faubus . . . had been silent on the integration attempts that would be made this fall in the schools of several cities in his state. His public stand had always been that integration was strictly a problem for local school boards to decide."<sup>58</sup> Thus, although in the past Faubus had exhibited "a moderate stand in favor of segregation,"<sup>59</sup> there was no indication of a professed ideological basis for his opposition to the federal government. Such inscrutability made him all the more mysterious. Crackpot, opportunist, or southern savior were different labels audiences could apply to fill in the mediated mosaic of ideological ambiguity.

However, as the opening day of school drew closer, "Faubus began to sound very much like an entirely different man." He "issued a statement bitterly accusing the Federal government of trying to cram integration down Arkansas' throat;"<sup>60</sup> appeared in a state court hearing where he won an injunction against the integration order by arguing that "a great majority of the people of Little Rock are opposed to integration;" and publicly warned that "bloodshed and mob violence would result."<sup>61</sup> When U.S. federal district Judge Ronald Davies threw out the injunction, Faubus "went on television and radio to drop a bombshell: He was calling out the Arkansas National Guard to preserve the peace at Little Rock's Central High School."<sup>62</sup> Along with the contradictions in Governor Faubus's persona, the media also designated him as the responsible character in the unfolding Little Rock melodrama. He was labeled as the specific agent who had set the drama in motion by ordering the National Guard into action. The "troops acted under direct orders of Gov. Orval E. Faubus,"<sup>63</sup> who had "create[d] the crisis."<sup>64</sup>

Portrayed as a fanatic who had lost touch with the reality of the very situation for which he was responsible, the Faubus character took on almost comic proportions. All during the Little Rock drama, Faubus maintained that he had done nothing to frustrate the order to integrate. He maintained, instead, that he had acted within his rights as governor to "preserve peace and to prevent bloodshed."<sup>65</sup> Faubus insisted that he was "not violating the order issued by a Federal District Court," but rather, was "using the Guardsmen to prevent violence."<sup>66</sup>

The Governor's persistence in this position was contrasted with print-mediated reports suggesting that regardless of Faubus's stated reasons, he was indeed frustrating the order to integrate and defying the authority of the United States federal government. For example, a headline in the *New York Times* announced, "Faubus Bids U.S. Recede on Order For Integration." The article quoted the governor as saying that the only way to prevent bloodshed

was "that the United States would have to recede from its demand for immediate school integration" in Little Rock—Faubus saw "no alternative."<sup>67</sup>

Thus, as mediated, Faubus was portrayed as a man "face to face with the power of the U.S. Government, and that Government could not possibly ignore or withdraw in the face of Faubus's challenge to its courts, to law and simple decency."<sup>68</sup> While this image might engender support among some of the more fanatic states' rights advocates, for most it probably conveyed the image of an unrealistic obstructionist. This perception was heightened by mediated reports that Faubus had retreated "behind the guarded gates of his executive mansion."<sup>69</sup> As *Time* noted, "To ward off all invaders, Orval Faubus deployed his militia around his pillared executive mansion, disappeared from public view like a feudal baron under siege."<sup>70</sup> By implication, mysterious machinations inside the mansion were purposefully denied public scrutiny.

From the Governor's mansion—"still guarded by the state police"<sup>71</sup>—Faubus had "fired off a wild-eyed message to the President of the U.S."<sup>72</sup> The telegram was widely reported as asking for Eisenhower's help in stopping the "unwarranted interference of Federal agents in this area," declaring that Faubus would "not cooperate with the Federal agents now investigating his use of troops to block integration,"<sup>73</sup> complaining that "his telephone lines were being tapped," and saying he feared that "Federal authorities [were] . . . plotting to arrest him."<sup>74</sup>

Faubus's persona was developed further as the media tried to capture his motivation. Described as an "opportunist" who did not represent the people in whose name he had undertaken this action, the Governor provided "no reasonable explanation for [his] highhanded action, except that he hoped to make political capital for himself."<sup>75</sup> Moreover, engaged audiences learned that Faubus recently had begun "talking about running for a third term in a state that traditionally frowns on three terms for a governor. He needed a dramatic issue, and he needed the red-neck votes of segregationist eastern Arkansas."<sup>76</sup> Thus, he may have decided "that a strong stand for segregation now would be politically popular in 1958, when he [could] bid for a third term."<sup>77</sup>

The media found "indications that Faubus was being used by segregationist politicians in the South,"<sup>78</sup> who planned to issue the first challenge to federally ordered integration outside of their own region. As noted in the *New York Times*, "What has taken shape [since the Supreme Court's 1954 decision] is an unremitting war for the border states which are divided on racial policies because of their mixed population ratios. Deep South political leaders, seeing the encirclement threat, have regularly sent emissaries to the border states to bolster their position."<sup>79</sup>

The media coverage did portray some support for the governor's action; however, most of it was localized in the South. For example, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* maintained that although the "successful refusal by anyone



to obey the orders of the court would lead to confusion that would eventually amount to chaos," the issue in Arkansas was a "clash between unrealistic laws and rulings . . . and the responsibility of a state's chief executive to preserve order. Governor Faubus has raised a national issue intimately concerned with how a theory not accepted by a people can be hastily translated into action."<sup>80</sup>

However, the media also indicated that Faubus was not speaking for the community of Little Rock. Indeed, it maintained Little Rock did not ask for help, and high-profile citizens were quoted as saying that the governor's aid was unnecessary. Thus, while the majority of citizens in Little Rock may not have welcomed the order to desegregate, there was also a "growing body of Southern white opinion that segregation must yield to the times."<sup>81</sup> The *Arkansas Gazette*—"the state's leading newspaper"—maintained that the "matter of gradual limited integration in Little Rock schools was a local problem which had been well and wisely handled by responsible local officials who had—and we believe still have—the support of a majority of the people of this city."<sup>82</sup>

Probably the most vocal and widely covered critic of Governor Faubus's action was the Mayor of Little Rock, Woodrow Wilson Mann. Mann was adamant that no one in Little Rock had asked Faubus to send troops to the city, and the mayor and the Board of Education had insisted that the local police force could handle any potential mayhem.<sup>83</sup> Mann "vehemently attacked Faubus's intervention as a 'political hoax,'"<sup>84</sup> and demanded that the Governor "give the people of this state evidence of possible racial violence instead of running off and hiding" behind the guarded walls of the mansion.<sup>85</sup> According to Mann, the Governor made a "wholly unwarranted interference with the internal affairs of this city." He acted "without request from those of us who are directly responsible for the preservation of peace and order. The only effect of his action is to create tensions where none existed. If any racial trouble does develop the blame rests squarely on the doorstep of the Governor's mansion."<sup>86</sup>

Mann's criticism of Faubus was not limited to the governor's thwarting of the agreed-upon integration plan. The mayor also expressed the concern of many: The governor had placed himself and the state on a collision course with the United States government. Mann, quoted on the front page of the *New York Times*, charged that Faubus's "words spell sedition, his defiance rebellion. . . . His word and action echo another period of our history when irresponsible men plunged this nation into a tragic civil war."<sup>87</sup> The mayor also made public appeals to the other main character of this drama—President Eisenhower. Maintaining that Faubus's calling out the National Guard to prevent integration had created a "state of anarchy,"<sup>88</sup> Mann called upon Eisenhower for action: "The President of the United States can no longer ignore the gravity of the situation. Time for realistic action is long-since delayed. The issue of inte-



gration has become secondary—the security and prestige of the United States of America is paramount.”<sup>89</sup>

Eisenhower's character in this mediated narrative is intriguing. His role is analogous to Beckett's *Godot*: While he is an integral part of the plot narrative, he always seems to be just offstage during act one. One explanation for this is that Eisenhower had physically removed himself from the nation's capital. On 4 September, the president and Mamie went to Newport, Rhode Island, for a vacation that Eisenhower predicted would be “the time of our lives.”<sup>90</sup> At a press conference before leaving Washington, Eisenhower was asked about the developing situation in Little Rock. He observed that there “seems to have been a road block thrown in the way [of integration] and the next step will have to be by the lawyers and the jurists.”<sup>91</sup> This remark signaled what was to be the underlying tone of Eisenhower's “go slow” approach for most of act one.

The media assured Americans the administration was “keeping on top of the situation.” Almost as soon as the events in Arkansas became national news, Eisenhower ordered the Justice Department to keep in “close touch” with “the school integration dispute in Little Rock.” However, spokespersons for the administration were always careful to add that there were “no plans for Federal intervention. Officials took the position that it was neither legally possible nor politically desirable for the Executive branch of the Government to step in at this stage. They said the next move was up to the Federal district judge sitting in the case.”<sup>92</sup>

Part of the reason for the perceived dearth in presidential leadership during what we are calling act one no doubt also stems from Eisenhower's own beliefs, especially those regarding the Supreme Court's rulings on desegregation. As Eisenhower biographer Stephen E. Ambrose notes: “Eisenhower had great sympathy for the white South . . . and Faubus counted on it to keep the President inactive while he battled the federal court.”<sup>93</sup>

Eisenhower was described as taking “a moderate stand on the integration question. While recommending a go-slow policy, he has often spoken of its inevitability.”<sup>94</sup> At a press conference on the morning the news of Little Rock broke, Eisenhower responded to a question about the events in Arkansas with a “call for restraint on the racial issue.” He added “You cannot change people's hearts merely by laws. Laws . . . presumably express the conscience of a nation and its determination or will to do something. But the laws here are to be executed gradually.” The president said that while he remained cognizant of the “emotional difficulties” encountered by blacks who attend separate schools, he also recognized that “there [we]re very strong emotions on the other side, people that see a picture of the mongrelization of the race, they call it.”<sup>95</sup>

The president felt that Americans would “whip this thing in the long run” by “being true to themselves and not merely by law.”<sup>96</sup> Eisenhower had earlier stated he could “conceive of no situation in which he would use Federal

troops to enforce school integration or other civil rights matters in the South."<sup>97</sup> The positions advocated publicly by the president were not incompatible with Faubus's. At times, Faubus even cited President Eisenhower to support a traditional states' rights philosophy. Faubus maintained Eisenhower had described the federal government as "a creature of the states," warning that it should not become "a Frankenstein that would engulf and destroy the separate state governments."<sup>98</sup>

Although the president made it clear that he had "no desire to get the Administration involved in the controversy," he did telegram Governor Faubus saying, "The only assurance I can give you is that the Federal Constitution will be upheld by me by every legal means at my command."<sup>99</sup> This message was described in the *New York Times* as "the strongest stand the President has yet taken in support of the United States Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional segregation of Negro and white students in the public schools."<sup>100</sup>

As the curtain drew down on act one, the media directed attention to the impasse in Arkansas, President Eisenhower's desire not to involve the federal government, his professed hope that good sense would prevail, and the complex and dangerous legal options that loomed if the situation did not resolve itself. In closing our description of act one, we conclude that emergent rhetorical characteristics associated with this print-mediated narrative included dramatic staging with potential for historic or widespread conflict, vivid characterization, and lengthy, sometimes tortuous, mediated rationales to impute motives for inexplicable or mysterious actions. Moreover, disputants and disputes were located in several areas simultaneously; in this instance, local, regional, and national arenas.

### Act Two

Act one ended with a fully developed problem and no real sense of future direction. Act two was to provide a hope for resolution, but as with most three-act dramas, that hope would prove to be false. A peaks and valleys scenic environment of raised hopes and dashed expectations would dominate act two as an increasingly complex dramatic narrative continued to unfold.

### Protagonist and Antagonist Meet

Heroes and villains eventually face each other. The White House strategy was to let Faubus play out his hand with the hope that he would eventually realize how untenable his situation was. Faubus, in turn, seemed to be looking for a quick exit from his present dilemma. As *Newsweek* noted: "It was at the height of the pressures against him, when seemingly he couldn't escape from his own trap, that the way was opened to him."<sup>101</sup> That "way out" was to have a

meeting with the president. Attorney General Herbert Brownell was strongly against the meeting because Faubus had "soiled" himself. Brownell also pointed out that Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays, "two senators, a Little Rock newspaper publisher, and Winthrop Rockefeller had all tried, and 'all came to the conclusion it was hopeless.' 'Well,' Eisenhower replied, 'Perhaps the time is now ripe.'" And he told the attorney general to get together with Sherman Adams to compose a telegram "for Faubus to send to Newport, requesting a meeting."<sup>102</sup>

The media held that the meeting was at Faubus's request. The *New York Times* reported that Governor Faubus "asked President Eisenhower today to confer with him on racial integration of Central High School in Little Rock. The President promptly suggested a meeting [at Newport] Friday afternoon or Saturday morning." The *Times* also seemed skeptical, observing that the day before Faubus had "seemed reluctant to talk to the President about the Arkansas situation," but, the *Times* reasoned, it would be "unseemly" to "refuse a meeting with the President. . . . That language hardly suggested he would ask for a conference and include in his request a statement of willingness to comply with Federal Court decrees." However, the administration's spokespersons were adamant in their claim that the governor's telegram "had reached the White House without advance notice," and that no "White House staff members including Sherman Adams, the President's principal deputy, had been in touch with Governor Faubus by telephone in advance of the Governor's message."<sup>103</sup>

The meeting at Newport—"a momentous confrontation, set before a backdrop of high feeling and history"<sup>104</sup>—yielded some hope that the drama in Little Rock could be resolved. The print-mediated environment implied that because of the titanic stakes involved, reason would prevail. No longer was the president "off stage," playing golf and delegating aides to keep him informed about events. He was, instead, "taking charge" and acting in a manner suitable to a chief executive facing a constitutional crisis.

Historically, we know that at the Newport meeting Eisenhower suggested that instead of withdrawing the militia, Faubus simply "change the orders, directing the Guard to maintain the peace while admitting the Negro pupils. . . . Eisenhower said it was not beneficial to anybody 'to have a trial of strength between the President and a governor because there could only be one outcome—that is, the state would lose, and I did not want to see any governor humiliated.' Faubus seemed to seize the offer." Eisenhower and Faubus were then joined by Adams, Hays, and Brownell. "To that group," according to Ambrose, "Faubus reiterated his intention to change the Guard's orders."<sup>105</sup>

What actually transpired at the meeting between the two was not revealed publicly. Our reading of notes dictated by the president covering the events at Newport confirmed that by the end of the meeting, the president believed the governor was "very appreciative" of *his* stance and it was Eisenhower's

"understanding that he was going back to Arkansas to act within a matter of hours to revoke his orders to the Guard to prevent re-entry of the Negro children into the school."<sup>106</sup> The media explained: "Full details of the agreement between the Governor and the President cannot be made public until Governor Faubus returns to Arkansas and again assumes the powers of Governor that lapse when he leaves the state."<sup>107</sup> Although the media could not "reveal the details" of the meeting, the engaged public was assured that Faubus had agreed to "respect and carry out Federal court orders for racial integration of the Little Rock high schools."<sup>108</sup>

The coverage carried an additional message: The president had been firm with the governor. Faubus reportedly received "a 'Dutch Uncle' talk from the man under whom he served [in the Second World War]. The President could, of course, appreciate the governor's responsibility to preserve law and order in his state. . . . But when it came to flouting the authority of the courts there could be no compromise, no other answer. The courts must be obeyed."<sup>109</sup> "[T]he result," according to *Time* magazine, "was clear: the President of the United States had flatly insisted that the governor of Arkansas must bow to the law and withdraw from his position of rebellion."<sup>110</sup>

Thus, immediately following the Newport conference, there was a collective sense that the crisis of Little Rock may be over—resolved by the president. However, when Faubus returned to Little Rock he neither withdrew the Guard nor changed their orders. Now the narrative shifted and "an air of pessimism crept into the situation" as reliable sources indicated that Faubus had "hardened . . . his attitude."<sup>111</sup>

Faced with the stark realization that Faubus was not going to honor the agreement reached in Newport, Eisenhower immediately "wanted to issue a statement denouncing Faubus for his duplicity," but was talked out of it by Brownell and Adams.<sup>112</sup> Instead, two separate messages seemed to come out of the White House. Publicly, press secretary James Hagerty "would not concede that the [Newport] conference . . . between the President and Governor Faubus had been a failure. Nor would he say whether the President felt the Governor had failed to keep promises made to him." Instead the administration adopted a "wait and see" public stance.<sup>113</sup>

The White House also leaked a statement Eisenhower reportedly made to staffers indicating he was "deeply disappointed" voluntary efforts had failed to settle the school integration controversy at Little Rock. This pronouncement was interpreted as "an official admission that the conference with Governor Orval E. Faubus here last Saturday had failed to produce the results the President had expected."<sup>114</sup>

Act two moved toward a conclusion with a hearing held in Judge Ronald N. Davies' federal court on 20 September. Faubus did not appear in person, but his lawyers "read a statement questioning the federal court's authority," and

then left. Judge Davies "promptly enjoined Faubus and the Guard from interfering with the progress of integration at Central High."<sup>115</sup> *Newsweek* magazine wrote that a "legal point of some importance in the problem of integration was settled last week in Little Rock, Ark.: The National Guard cannot be used to enforce segregation."<sup>116</sup> The Justice Department greeted that ruling with "relief and satisfaction." Engaged publics were told that in the "view of officials . . . the integrity of the judicial process and the principle of Federal supremacy had been victorious. . . . [T]he first officially backed physical resistance to the policy had ended in failure."<sup>117</sup>

The governor issued a statement that although he had instructed his attorneys "to exhaust every legal remedy to appeal," he would comply with the order as long as it was in effect.<sup>118</sup> The legal pathway was cleared for the nine black students to enter Central High School. After issuing the orders to withdraw the Guard, Faubus promptly left for Georgia to attend a conference of southern governors.

### A Touchstone Incident: Violence at Central High School

On 23 September, a "howling racist mob gathered around Central High, screaming protests against integration."<sup>119</sup> While the mob busied itself beating four black reporters, eight black students slipped into Central through a side door. Urged on by screams of "The niggers are in our school," the mob rushed police lines. Shouts of "lynch the niggers" were reported. The black students in the school were not physically harmed, but alarmed school officials sent them home at noon. As Ambrose noted wryly, "Integration at Central High had lasted three hours."<sup>120</sup> In a private letter dated 24 September 1957, the president defended being away from the White House while the trouble ensued and indicated that he did "not want to exaggerate the significance of the admittedly serious situation in Arkansas." Calling Faubus "misguided" and "motivated entirely by what he believes to be political advantage in a particular locality," the president maintained that the United States had "ample resources . . . to cope with this kind of thing." "The great need," he said, was "to act calmly, deliberately," and give "every offender opportunity to cease his defiance of Federal law and to peaceably obey the proper orders of the Federal court." Then, "even if it becomes necessary to employ considerable force," it can be "understood by all, and the individuals who have offended are not falsely transformed into martyrs."<sup>121</sup>

Such moderate claims aside, the governor's prophetic warnings of violence had been fulfilled. "But there was growing belief that the governor and his entourage had taken steps to make his own predictions come true."<sup>122</sup> As reports from Arkansas "clearly indicated the inability—and in some instances the unwillingness—of the Little Rock police to cope with the mob,"<sup>123</sup>



Attorney General Brownell said that "the President had to act. Eisenhower agreed,"<sup>124</sup> and prepared "his first step" toward "intervention."<sup>125</sup>

At the close of act two, we find an explanation for how the narrative drama had expanded. Symbolic influence occurs as protagonist and antagonist meet; there is seeming agreement and hopes are raised for resolution. Then there is a time of seeming betrayal and confusion followed by a touchstone incident that dashes hope for a peaceful denouement. The violence occurring as the curtain closes on act two demands resolution. The stage is now set for the dramatic confrontation and conclusion contained in act three.

### Act Three

Events in act three unfold quickly, dramatically and in rapid-fire, but not unexpected, ritual sequence. The essence of the melodrama is highlighted in act three; it is here that the crisis gets its most decisive definition and enactment.

#### Coercive Persuasion

The mediated description of "Eisenhower in action" was impressive. The president was described as "angry" and threatening to use force to "prevent obstruction of law and enforce court-ordered school integration" in Little Rock. Calling the mob actions in Little Rock "disgraceful occurrences," Eisenhower declared: "I will use the full power of the United States including whatever force may be necessary, to prevent any obstruction of the law and to carry out the orders of the Federal Court."<sup>126</sup> The *New York Times* observed that this was "by far the strongest statement the President yet had made on any civil rights matter. It marked a reversal of his 17 July news conference statement that he could not think of a situation in which he would want to use or where it would be wise to use Federal troops to enforce decrees affecting civil rights controversies."<sup>127</sup>

#### Truly "Administrative" Rhetoric

On the evening of 23 September Eisenhower signed "an emergency proclamation commanding all persons obstructing justice to cease and desist and to disperse." This was labeled by the White House as a "necessary legal prerequisite to the calling out of Federal troops if the enforcement of law in Little Rock continues to be impeded."<sup>128</sup> The next day it became obvious that "his legally correct order went unheeded and a mob ringed Central High a second day."<sup>129</sup> The president took action, which *Time* magazine headlined as "Quick, Hard and Decisive." "The weeks of patient working toward peaceful solution were



over. . . . Two aides and a secretary watched silently as President Eisenhower, his decision made, picked up a pen and signed a historic document" ordering the secretary of defense "to use the armed forces of the U.S. to uphold the law of the land in Little Rock."<sup>130</sup>

### An Appeal to Law and Order and Presidential Duty

On 24 September 1957, flanked by the portraits "of the four leaders whom the President had stated he regards as the greatest American heroes—Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Robert E. Lee"—Eisenhower delivered from the White House a thirteen minute address to the nation concerning the situation in Little Rock. It was "a firm address, with some language unusually strong for President Eisenhower."<sup>131</sup>

The president provided background on a "sequence of events" leading to the Little Rock school case. Eisenhower stated that the Little Rock School Board had approved a "moderate plan for the gradual desegregation of the public schools in that city."<sup>132</sup> The United States court in Little Rock "which has supervisory responsibility under the law for the plan of desegregation in the public schools," approved the plan, finding it a "gradual rather than an abrupt change from the existing system." The Court issued three separate orders directing that the approved desegregation plan be carried out. "Proper and sensible observance of the law then demanded the respectful obedience which the nation has a right to expect from all its people. This, unfortunately, has not been the case at Little Rock." Although never mentioning the governor by name, the president blamed "demagogic extremists" and "certain misguided persons, many of them imported into Little Rock by agitators," for creating the present difficulties.

Eisenhower said that it had been his "hope this localized situation" would be resolved on a local level. However, "[l]ocal authorities have not eliminated that violent opposition and, under the law, I yesterday issued a Proclamation calling upon the mob to disperse." The main thrust of Eisenhower's address to the nation was that, as president, he was bound to act to uphold the federal law when it was violated. "Whenever normal agencies prove inadequate to the task and it becomes necessary for the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to use its powers and authority to uphold Federal Courts, the President's responsibility is inescapable."

The president said that the use of the powers of the executive branch is "limited to extraordinary and compelling circumstances. Manifestly, such an extreme situation has been created in Little Rock." While acknowledging that the Court's integration decision "affects the South more seriously than it does other sections of the country," Eisenhower was conciliatory, telling the nation that he knew from his "intimate personal knowledge," that the "overwhelming

majority of the people of the South—including those of Arkansas and of Little Rock—are of good will, united in their efforts to preserve and respect the law even when they disagree with it." As Ambrose observes, "In his statement to the nation, the President emphasized that he was not sending U.S. troops into the South to integrate the schools, but only to maintain the law."<sup>133</sup>

The media coverage of the president's address was correct in its portrayal of the president's concern for the maintenance of federal authority as well as in its depiction of his conciliatory tone toward the South. In particular, our analysis of the president's address reveals that Eisenhower added the following words extemporaneously as he delivered his speech: "The running of our school system and the maintenance of peace and order in each of our States are strictly local affairs and the Federal Government does not interfere except in very special cases and when requested by one of the several States." The only other significant passage added to the delivery copy of the address included the following extemporaneous observation: "[I]n a number of communities in Arkansas integration in the schools has already started and without violence of any kind."<sup>134</sup>

The international implications of the Little Rock situation were also put into studied relief by the president. Those states that complied with the *Brown* decisions "demonstrated to the world that we are a nation in which laws, not men, are supreme." Where noncompliance occurs, "a tremendous disservice . . . has been done to the nation in the eyes of the world." Moreover, "it would be difficult to exaggerate the harm that is being done to the prestige and influence, and indeed to the safety of our nation and the world." America's "enemies are gloating over this incident," and, all the while, the U.S. is "portrayed as a violator" of human rights. Troops will be removed, said Eisenhower, when the "City of Little Rock . . . return[s] to its normal habits of peace and order and [then] a blot upon the fair name and high honor of our nation in the world will be removed. Thus will be restored the image of America."<sup>135</sup>

There was clear indication that international embarrassment had as much to do with Eisenhower's motivation to resolve the Little Rock crisis as any concern over the morality of the cause or the consistency of his ideology. By implication, Little Rock constituted a loss in the propaganda battle with the Soviets.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the legal arguments advanced in the speech and portrayed by the press coverage seemed to overshadow Eisenhower's stated international image concerns. The address conspicuously avoided the ethical questions raised by resistance to desegregation. As will become even more apparent, Eisenhower's focus on legal rather than moral issues, consistent with his belief that it was inadvisable, if not impossible to legislate morality, enacted an important rhetorical template with significant implications for the country and future presidents.

## Federal Troops in Little Rock

As if reconnected to the coverage in act one, the mediated coverage in act three reemphasized the observation that—as stated in *Newsweek*, “what happened at Little Rock went far beyond Central High.”<sup>137</sup> Eisenhower’s “history-making” decision was “based on a formal finding that his ‘cease and desist’ proclamation issued last night, had not been obeyed” and “was one of historic importance politically, socially, constitutionally.”<sup>138</sup> This immediate judgment on U.S. cultural history was reified in the images surrounding the federal “occupation.”

Once in Little Rock, the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division, some thousand strong, “cowed racist agitators.” “With bayonets fixed on their M-1 rifles, troops in battle dress broke up small, sullen knots of civilians as soon as they formed” around the school. As the *New York Times* put it: “Integration at bayonet point was effected at 9:25 a.m., forty minutes after the opening bell.”<sup>139</sup>

Then the commanding officer, General Edwin Walker, delivered a “lecture on civics” to the white students assembled in the auditorium of Central High School. As *Life* magazine portentously explained, “He assured the students they had nothing to fear from the troops. But in solemn voice and with steely deliberation he warned that any students who interfered with the integration plans would be removed by officers and handed over to the local police. Most of the students applauded.” *Life* readers were also told: “No citizen, including the President, thought that this settled anything except that the federal government is supreme. This is all the troops were supposed to prove.”<sup>140</sup> Thus, there was a mediated reality that suggested that the federal intervention in Little Rock did not end the dispute.

Another piece of evidence supporting this view is Governor Faubus’s reconstruction of “the battle of Little Rock” two days after the “occupation” of the city by the 101st Airborne. The governor’s stories of abuse at federal hands abounded. But few, including other Southern governors, took him seriously, and these recriminations probably should be considered a mere epilogue.

We do believe, however, that the rhetorical contours of act three deserve a bit more scrutiny. The use of coercive persuasion, administrative rhetoric, a major national presidential address stressing law and order, duty, and national unity, and the commitment and ongoing presence of troops all gave engaged publics a mediated perception of crisis. Each of these characteristics was also crucial in reifying the crisis atmosphere established in acts one and two. The final act, of course, was pivotal in completing the dramatic narrative.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

According to Edelman, "The dissemination of contradictory messages and the alternation of threat and reassurance . . . serve both to keep people anxious and to keep them docile." Villains, victims, and heroes are crucial to the political news story; and it is the dynamism of this interactive spectacle that is critical, not necessarily the substance of the story itself. Thus news reports tend to focus upon "constructed reality" rather than the dynamics of immediate experience and its situated import.<sup>141</sup> The mediated images help construct our joint sense of contemporary political reality; however, in the heat of the symbolic battle, we may be unable to conduct a close examination of structural relations accounting for the actual meaning of unfolding events and to find the immediate curative historical narratives that help explain that experience.

Revisionist historians and recent presidential scholars have gradually reassessed Eisenhower's leadership abilities as well as his actions on civil rights.<sup>142</sup> R. Gordon Hoxie, for example, argues that Eisenhower has been "[q]uite unfairly . . . portrayed as dragging his feet in the civil rights area." At the time, regarding Little Rock, however, Eisenhower "had [the] overwhelming support of the press."<sup>143</sup> While this may be true, Eisenhower's actions were not unanimously praised by historians.

By constructing intensive narrative plots, story lines, villains, heroes, themes, images, and contexts which helped audiences define and interpret a political crisis, mediated narrative requires careful analysis and circumspection. In this essay we have tried to indicate that part of such scholarly care ought to include a context developed by historical investigation which helps the scholar interpret more richly the mediated environment of the time. Both the mediated environment and the history are rhetorical constructions. We have merely tried to give both text and context clearer theoretical and methodological underpinnings.

We tentatively suggest that mediated crisis narratives may negatively impact our immediate collective sense of history. Early historians judged Eisenhower deficient in his handling of Little Rock. Revisionist historians were less harsh. One explanation, beyond the new archival evidence open to Eisenhower scholars, might be that the revisionists were a bit more removed from the mediated coverage than earlier historians. Such speculation must remain merely that at this writing. Other issues are a bit clearer.

After *Brown vs. Board of Education*, writes Elmo Richardson, "a great bull lurched into [Ike's] orderly schoolroom." Richardson maintains further that Ike misjudged the intransigence of southern extremists and overestimated the public's understanding of the issues—what Ike referred to as the "common sense" of the American people. Eisenhower waited for events to cool and they merely heated. Other negative evaluations were mounted by the critics. For

example, it was argued that the international shame of Little Rock did little for the "nation's image abroad" and many felt Eisenhower's interest in civil rights was chiefly a result of that fact. According to Richardson, such an "image" demeaned the administration's actual record.<sup>144</sup>

Early historians also charged Eisenhower with weakness, citing his slow response to the crisis and his seeming insensitivity to the morality of the situation. The mere fact that he was vacationing while human rights were being trampled gave cause for political sniping.<sup>145</sup> Arthur Larson, however, maintains that the charge is misleading. He insists that Eisenhower was no different than other presidents when denounced for inaction in their presumed role as chief moral educators for the nation. While one may fault "[b]ackground, environment, age, limited exposure to the problem . . . or [even] an excessively constricted conception of the presidency," Larson argues, one must not attribute Little Rock to "indecision, weakness or lack of initiative."<sup>146</sup>

We believe the president's so-called detachment was a matter of both principled substance and rhetorical style. Such a view comports with what Fred I. Greenstein has labeled Eisenhower's "hidden-hand" presidency.<sup>147</sup> Certainly Eisenhower's principled position to avoid, if at all possible, federal intrusion into the lives of U.S. citizens was a tack that was easily demonstrable early in the first campaign and consistently held throughout his presidency. As Eisenhower indicated by night letter to Senator Richard B. Russell on 27 September 1957, "Few times in my life have I felt as saddened as when the obligations of my office required me to order the use of force within a state to carry out the decisions of a Federal Court." Yet the president lamented: "Failure to act. . . would [have] be[en] tantamount to acquiescence in anarchy and the dissolution of the union."<sup>148</sup>

We believe Eisenhower's public style was in opposition to mediated melodramatics of any sizeable dimension. Ike's moderation, or, for some, extreme restraint could have been (and perhaps properly was) perceived as especially unseemly in the context of a mediated crisis. The president paid a price north and south for trying to walk the tightrope between what he termed, the "extremists" on either side.<sup>149</sup> The president's style was especially in relief during Little Rock and we believe it was incommensurate with the mediated imperatives. Even if there is an element of truth to perceptions of Eisenhower as reactionary rather than initiator—as one who left details to others and subsequently paid the price—such negative evaluations can hardly explain the social, moral, and political complexities that Little Rock would come to symbolize.

If unforeseen circumstances forced Eisenhower to intervene at Little Rock, positive and negative judgments on the propriety, intensity, and consistency of his actions would engage audiences no matter what he did or when he did it, nor would it please all participants vis-a-vis how it was accomplished. Such



evaluation is the natural outcome of testy and intractable domestic conundrums faced by all presidents. Such judgments are necessary if not sufficient conditions for mass-mediated politics. While we still might censure Eisenhower for narrow vision, narrow construction of the powers of the presidency, a flawed understanding of the separation of powers, and a certain amount of undue restraint owing to his pro-southern sensibilities (both political and personal), given the novelty of his charge and the intensity of the political and social stakes, one might be hard pressed to find a president to do better under similar circumstances. By both photograph and printed word, an historical epoch was captured in the mediated realities. We have tried to temper part of the heady immediacy of these media-documented events with the historical record.

A comparison between Eisenhower and his successor John F. Kennedy is surely instructive in this context. Neither the first nor the last president to go slow on moral advocacy efforts, Eisenhower was the first president to confront a monumental federal-state conflict over civil rights in this century, and his hard knocks were instructive and sobering to subsequent presidents. And while it may be the case that John F. Kennedy finally did throw down the moral gauntlet and perform the expected ritual of moral educator after the Birmingham crisis in 1963, there were, arguably, two long years of inaction on his part with respect to black civil rights.<sup>150</sup> Kennedy's inaction was in part due to the ghosts of Little Rock and the long shadows of federal bayonets raised on southern soil. Kennedy also suffered recriminations for action too little and too late on this great moral frontier. In addition, both Eisenhower and Kennedy feared international opprobrium during their respective civil rights challenges. Both were anxious to resolve the incongruity of exporting "freedom" abroad and the increasing evidence of its absence in the United States. The Soviet Union, of course, was exploiting the inequities involved for its own purposes.<sup>151</sup> Little Rock and Birmingham cast a domestic shadow that ran willy-nilly into the center of the Cold War.

Finally, given the widespread public accounts of President Eisenhower's feelings about the Supreme Court's integration decision, his sympathy for the South, and his concerns for the doctrine of states' rights, we find that the president may have inadvertently given comfort to the very extremists he decried in his televised address. As Tony Fryer asserts, "Long after the end of the crisis . . . Little Rock retained a place in the nation's collective memory." Little Rock became a harbinger of future racial unrest in this nation. Fryer faults both Eisenhower and Faubus with being "unwilling to subordinate narrow electoral goals to the enforcement of moral principle." And, without necessarily questioning their motives, both men certainly "entangled desegregation in a mass of political considerations that invited confrontation." Fryer also highlights a historical trend:



The focus on legalism, which continued until at least the 1980s, had the effect of confusing means with ends. Obedience to law itself—not the substantive value of equal educational opportunity—became the basis for both compliance and resistance. In short, many government leaders expected first Southerners, then all Americans, to accept minority rights as a matter of compulsion rather than consent.<sup>152</sup>

Ironically, then, if Fryer is correct, Eisenhower's discourse on civil rights, with its focus on law and order, served to reinforce the very thing Eisenhower most feared, legal compulsion on a contested moral issue. For while it was the case that Eisenhower fully believed that the issue indeed was a moral question, he railed against legal sanctions as remedies, especially remedies that would put the federal government at loggerheads with the states.

In turn, "focus on the rule-of-law led inevitably to controversy over the nature of judicial power in a representative democracy." Thus the polarized camps between local and federal authority and between judicial activism versus restraint were allowed to set up their tents in a valley rent by conflict. The result of this debate over federal versus state authority and the nature and scope of "proper" exercise of judicial power "was that questions of moral principle" were submerged and subordinated to a "conservative moderation."<sup>153</sup> Thus did the nation veer from its traditional ideals of justice, encapsulated in notions of equity and fairness embodied in a representative democracy for all.

Michael R. Belknap highlights a different lesson but a related legacy:

In leaving the job of combating these troublemakers to unreliable state authorities, the Eisenhower administration evaded an obligation. It also courted disaster. Little Rock was the price the nation paid for the failure of the President and the Justice Department to assume responsibility for controlling disorder ignited by the Federal government itself.<sup>154</sup>

Because "the violent bigots of the Eisenhower era made explosives their weapon of choice," Belknap argues, Eisenhower's emphasis on states' rights merely allowed local officials in the South "to exploit [their power] to keep blacks from exercising their constitutional rights."<sup>155</sup>

Perhaps Eisenhower did not take up the moral gauntlet because of his abiding trust in the common sense and morality of the majority of the American people, who, he seemed to feel, would eventually overcome the injustices of racism. Certainly Eisenhower sent in federal troops to prevent mob rule and to protect his and the nation's constitutional authority, as he had stated in his address to the nation. E. Frederic Morrow, an Eisenhower appointee and the "first black person in history to have served a United States President in an executive capacity," ascribes Eisenhower's insertion of troops to more narrow

motives: Faubus had ridiculed the president and the troops were sent in as a direct response to personal insult.<sup>156</sup>

We believe the mediated drama at Little Rock was inevitable. In that narrative, there was a rich source of conflict and deep emotional and legal tensions. We find an intriguing ally for this stance in the words of Presbyterian minister Dunbar H. Ogden, the president of the Greater Little Rock Ministerial Association:

This had to happen someplace in the South. It was inevitable that there was going to be a plan, worked out, approved and accepted, for gradual integration. It was inevitable that somewhere a governor, under pressure of extreme segregationists, was going to stop integration by calling out the National Guard. This may be looked back upon by future historians as the turning point—for good—of race relations in this country. If the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution can be made good in Little Rock, then it can be made good in Arkansas, then eventually it can be made good throughout the South.<sup>157</sup>

We would merely observe here that the good minister's assessment that Little Rock would be regarded by future historians as a "turning point" for "good" "race relations" was perhaps a bit too optimistic.

Despite the mixed evaluations documented here, we would be remiss if we did not end on one positive note. Eisenhower was the first president in the twentieth century who faced a domestic crisis that had provoked images of the Reconstruction era. It was a difficult and profoundly vexing problem, with long roots and deep divisions. Events and subsequent mediated narratives emanating from Little Rock, however, did much to force his hand. Thus we would observe that media creates as well as reflects history and history can at times serve as a corrective to mediated realities. Taking an even longer view of history, we believe that by sending federal troops to Little Rock to protect the equal rights of children to attend school, Eisenhower became a key participant in helping restore a political, historical, and cultural vision of a nation and a republicanism represented by one of his most esteemed predecessors, Abraham Lincoln.

## NOTES

1. See Richard A. Cherwitz and Kenneth S. Zagacki, "Consummatory Versus Justificatory Crisis Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 307-24; D. Ray Heisey, "Reagan and Mitterrand Respond to International Crisis: Creating Versus Transcending Appearances," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 325-35; David C. Klope, "Defusing a Foreign Policy Crisis: Myth and Victimhood in Reagan's 1983 Lebanon/Grenada Address," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 336-49; Ralph E. Dowling and Gabrielle Marraro, "Grenada and the Great

- Communicator: A Study in Democratic Ethics," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 350-67; Thomas A. Hollihan, "The Public Controversy Over the Panama Canal Treaties: An Analysis of American Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 368-87. Two examinations of domestic civil rights crisis can be found in Steven R. Goldzwig and George N. Dionisopoulos, "John F. Kennedy's Civil Rights Discourse: The Evolution from 'Principled Bystander' to Public Advocate," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 179-98; Martin J. Medhurst, "Eisenhower, Little Rock, and the Rhetoric of Crisis," in *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric*, ed. Amos Kiewe (New York: Praeger, 1993), 19-46..
2. Kevin M. Carragee, "Interpretive Media Study and Interpretive Social Science," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7 (1990): 87.
  3. Kathleen J. Turner, "Rhetorical History as Social Construction." Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Southern Communication Association convention, Tampa, Florida, April 1991; quotations, 2.
  4. James C. Duram, *A Moderate Among Extremists: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the School Desegregation Crisis* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 52. The decision was handed down 17 May 1954.
  5. Robert Fredrick Burk, *The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 23, 109.
  6. Duram, 54.
  7. President's Response to Statement of Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Whitman Files, Cabinet Series, Box 6, Cabinet Meeting of 9 March 1956. Eisenhower Library (hereafter cited as DDE Library).
  8. Burk, 132.
  9. Duram, 55.
  10. Burk, 23-24.
  11. Duram, 60-61.
  12. Personal letter from the President to Captain E.E. "Swede" Hazlett, Whitman File, DDE Diary Series, Box 25, July 1957, DDE Dictation, 22 July 1957, DDE Library.
  13. Duram, 64.
  14. Letter from the President to the Honorable James F. Byrnes, Whitman File, DDE Diary Series, Box 25, July 1957, DDE Dictation, 23 July 1957, DDE Library.
  15. Letter from President Eisenhower to Mr. George Landes, Whitman Files, DDE Diary Series, Box 26, September 1957, DDE Dictation (2), 12 September 1957, DDE Library.
  16. Duram, 61.
  17. *Ibid.*, 62-63.
  18. The plan was actually handed down on 24 May 1955, one year after the *Brown* desegregation decision. The original *Brown* decision, of course, struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
  19. Burk, 150.
  20. *Ibid.*, 167.
  21. *Ibid.*, 165, 171.
  22. Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972* (New York: Oxford, 1990), 16-17; Burk, 163.
  23. Duram, 143.
  24. *Ibid.*, 60-61.
  25. Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 37.

26. Dan Nimmo and James E. Combs, *Mediated Political Realities*, 2nd ed. (White Plains: Longman, 1990), 18.
27. Edelman, 93-94.
28. *Ibid.*, 94.
29. *Ibid.*, 96.
30. Nimmo and Combs, esp., 16-17.
31. Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (New York: David McKay Company, 1962), 3.
32. Benjamin Fine, "Little Rock Told to Integrate Now Despite Militia," *New York Times*, 4 September 1957, A1.
33. "The South: Making a Crisis in Arkansas," *Time* (16 September 1957): 23.
34. William A. Emerson, "The South Gives Ground," *Newsweek* (9 September 1957): 34.
35. "The Great Issue," *Newsweek* (16 September 1957): 34.
36. "The South: Making a Crisis in Arkansas," 23.
37. Fine, A37.
38. "The Great Issue," 34.
39. Fine, A1, A37.
40. Bates, 65.
41. "The Great Issue," 33.
42. "Editorial Comments from the South," *New York Times*, 6 September 1957, A9.
43. Brownell to President, Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 8, 7 November 1957, 11-12, DDE Library.
44. "The Nation: Pains of History," *Time* (16 September 1957): 23.
45. Benjamin Fine, "Arkansas Troops Bar Negro Pupils; Governor Defiant," *New York Times*, 5 September 1957, A1, A20.
46. Benjamin Fine, "Little Rock Faces Showdown Today Over Integration," *New York Times*, 7 September 1957, A8.
47. "The Great Issue," 33.
48. Quoted in "Editorial Comments From the South," A9.
49. John N. Popham, "Strategy Test in South," *New York Times*, 9 September 1957, A18.
50. Bates, 49.
51. "The Nation: Pains of History," 24; Virgil T. Blossom, *It Has Happened Here* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 38.
52. "The News of the Week in Review: Little Rock, Arkansas," *New York Times*, 8 September 1957, E1.
53. Popham, A18.
54. "Hillbilly, Slightly Sophisticated," *Time* (16 September 1957): 24.
55. "The Governor . . . Who Put Himself Against the President and Federal Authority," *Newsweek* (16 September 1957): 34.
56. Anthony Lewis, "Washington Studies Little Rock Dispute," *New York Times*, 4 September 1957, 37.
57. "The News of the Week in Review: Up to Faubus," *New York Times*, 15 September 1957, 4, E1.
58. "The News of The Week in Review: Little Rock, Arkansas," E1; Emerson, 34; "Governor on the Spot," *New York Times*, 4 September 1957, 37.
59. "The Governor . . . Who Put Himself," 35.
60. Emerson, 34.
61. "The News of the Week in Review: Up to Faubus," E1.

62. Emerson, 34.
63. Fine, "Arkansas Troops Bar Negro Pupils," A1.
64. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
65. Fine, "Arkansas Troops Bar Negro Pupils," A1.
66. Fine, "Little Rock Faces Showdown Today, A1.
67. Benjamin Fine, "Faubus Bids U.S. Recede on Order For Integration," *New York Times*, 9 September 1957, 25.
68. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
69. "The Great Issue," 35.
70. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
71. Fine, "Little Rock Faces Showdown Today," A8.
72. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
73. Fine, "Arkansas Troops Bar Negro Showdown Today," A1.
74. Fine, "Little Rock Faces Showdown Today," A8.
75. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
76. *Ibid.*, 23.
77. "The Great Issue," 35.
78. "The Nation: Pains of History," 25.
79. Popham, "Strategy Test in South," A18; Blossom, 49.
80. "Editorial Comments From the South," *New York Times*, 6 September 1957, 9; "Faubus Defended," *New York Times*, 7 September 1957, A9; "Arkansas," *The New Republic* (16 September 1957): 5.
81. "The News of the Week in Review: Little Rock, Arkansas," E1.
82. "Editorial Comments From the South," A9.
83. Fine, "Little Rock Told to Integrate Now," 37.
84. "The Great Issue," 35.
85. Fine, "Little Rock Faces Showdown Today," A8.
86. Fine, "Arkansas Troops Bar Negro Pupils," A1.
87. Fine, "Faubus Bids U.S. Recede," A1.
88. Anthony Lewis, "President Weighs Integration Move," *New York Times*, 8 September 1957, A66.
89. Fine, "Faubus Bids U.S. Recede," A1.
90. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 413.
91. "Arkansas," 5.
92. Lewis, "Washington Studies Little Rock Dispute," A1.
93. Ambrose, 414.
94. "The News of the Week in Review: Little Rock, Arkansas," E1.
95. "The President's News Conference of September 3, 1957, *Public Papers*, 1957, 640, 646.
96. Lewis, "Washington Studies Little Rock Dispute," A37.
97. W. H. Lawrence, "President Sees Brownell Today," *New York Times*, 7 September 1957, A1.
98. Fine, "Faubus Bids U.S. Recede," A18.
99. Ambrose, 414.
100. W. H. Lawrence, "President Warns Governor Faubus He'll Uphold Law," *New York Times*, 6 September 1957, A1.
101. "The Governor's Broken Blade," *Newsweek* (23 September 1957): 30.
102. Ambrose, 415.

103. W. H. Lawrence, "President Agrees to Bid by Faubus For School Talks," *New York Times*, 12 September 1957, A1, A25.
104. "The Nation, Retreat from Newport," *Time* (23 September 1957): 11.
105. Ambrose, 416. We have adopted Ambrose's interpretation of the non-mediated private conversations and events that preceded, constituted, and followed the Newport meeting. Interpretations of the historical record, of course, may differ. For a different view see Medhurst.
106. "Notes dictated by the President on 8 October 1957 concerning the visit of Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas to Little Rock on 14 September 1957," Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 23, 8 October 1957, DDE Library.
107. W. H. Lawrence, "Gov. Faubus Assures President He'll Obey Integration Order, But Asks For Patience By U.S." *New York Times*, 15 September 1957, A1, A56.
108. Lawrence, "Gov. Faubus Assures President," A1. According to the *New York Times* the "statements of President Eisenhower and Gov. Orval E. Faubus after their Newport meeting created confusion and uncertainty" in Little Rock. Those closest to the dispute were saying that the situation was "still in a state of confusion," and "still vague and ambiguous." John N. Popham, "Confusion Grows in Arkansas Capital After Gov. Faubus and President Hold Parley," *New York Times*, 15 September 1957, A56.
109. "The Governor's Broken Blade," 29.
110. "The Nation, Retreat from Newport," 11.
111. Benjamin Fine, "Faubus Continues Talks with Hays, Impasse Remains," *New York Times*, 19 September 1957, A1.
112. Ambrose, 416.
113. W. H. Lawrence, "Eisenhower Adopts 'Wait and See' Stand on Moves by Faubus," *New York Times*, 21 September 1957, A11.
114. W. H. Lawrence, "Eisenhower 'Disappointed' By Impasse at Little Rock," *New York Times*, 20 September 1957, A1.
115. Ambrose, 417.
116. "Segregation: Battleground," *Newsweek* (30 September 1957): 38.
117. Anthony Lewis, "Action By Faubus Cheers U.S. Aides," *New York Times*, 21 September 1957, A1.
118. Benjamin Fine, "Gov. Faubus Withdraws Troops: Obeys Federal Court Injunction on Integration, But Will Appeal," *New York Times*, 21 September 1957, A10.
119. Ambrose, 418.
120. Ibid.
121. Letter to General Alfred M. Gruenther from the President, Whitman File, Diary Series, Box 9, 24 September 1957, DDE Library. Although he gave no direct public indication, there is some reason to suspect that the president actually felt deeply betrayed by Faubus. Whether guided by personal animosity through a perceived double cross at Newport, or merely expressing his irritation at having a visit to the links postponed, approximately one month later, the president, lamenting his inability to schedule a golf game with the vice-president, dictated the following message: "Dear Dick: I had been hoping to play golf this afternoon. . . If you already have a game, please don't think of changing your plans because mine are necessarily so uncertain because of the stupidity and duplicity of one called Faubus." Dictation by the President to the Vice-President, Whitman File, DDE Diary Series, 20 October 1957, DDE Library.
122. "A Historic Week of Civil Strife," *Life* (7 October 1957): 37.
123. Ibid., 39.



124. Ambrose, 418.
125. "A Historic Week of Civil Strife," 39.
126. W. H. Lawrence, "President Threatens to Use U.S. Troops, Orders Rioters in Little Rock to Desist; Mob Compels Nine Negroes to Leave School," *New York Times*, 24 September 1957, A1, A21.
127. Lawrence, "President Threatens to Use U.S. Troops," A21.
128. *Ibid.*, A1.
129. "A Historic Week of Civil Strife," 40.
130. "Quick, Hard & Decisive," *Time* (7 October 1957): 21-22.
131. Anthony Lewis, "President Sends Troops to Little Rock, Federalizes Arkansas National Guard; Tells Nation He Acted to Avoid Anarchy," *New York Times*, 25 September 1957, A14.
132. Unless otherwise specified all references to this address are taken from Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Federal Court Orders Must Be Upheld: President's Responsibility Is Inescapable," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 24 (15 October 1957): 11-12. When necessary, we will refer to the delivered speech and the delivery text, indicating important similarities and differences.
133. Ambrose, 420.
134. Text of the Address by the President of the United States, Delivered from his Office at the White House, Tuesday 24 September 1957, at 9:00 p.m., EDT, *As Actually Delivered*, Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 23, Little Rock Arkansas (2), DDE Library. The actual delivery text can be located in the Whitman Speech File, Box 22, Speech Drafts, DDE Library.
135. "Text of the Address by the President," 4.
136. The human rights abuses in the Soviet Union and in recent events describing the Soviet invasion of Hungary, in particular, were common to U.S. parlance at the time. A report that crossed the president's desk noted the following: "Soviet media single out the Little Rock situation for special attention and take pains to point out that armed national guardsmen are not there to protect the Negro children from the fanatics of the Ku Klux Klan, but to prevent them from entering the school." The same report quotes Radio Moscow as saying: "Mr. Lodge tells lies stuffed with slander and makes a great deal of fuss trying to prevent the Hungarian people from living in peace and quiet, but the cries of hundreds of Negro children, ill-treated by the whites, rise from the Southern states and drown out his voice." *World Reaction to U.S. Racial Integration Incidents and Reaction to U.S. Integration Incidents Increases*, Whitman File, DDE Diary Series, Box 27, September 1957, Toner Notes 12 and 13, September 1957, DDE Library.
137. "The President . . . The South," *Newsweek* (7 October 1957): 27.
138. Lewis, "President Sends Troops to Little Rock," A1.
139. Homer Bigart, "U.S. Troops Enforce Peace in Little Rock As Nine Negroes Return to Their Classes; President to Meet Southern Governors," *New York Times*, 26 September 1957, A1.
140. "A Historic Week of Civil Strife," 44, 43.
141. Edelman, 98; 101-2.
142. See for example, Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Anthony James Joes, "Eisenhower Revisionism: The Tide Comes In," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 15 (1985): 561-71; Mary S. McCauliffe, "Commentary/Eisenhower, the President," *Journal of American History* 68 (1981): 625-32; Mark Stern, "Presidential Strategies and Civil Rights: Eisenhower, The Early Years,

- 1952-1954," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 19 (1989): 769-95; Michael S. Mayer, "With Much Deliberation and Some Speed: Eisenhower and the Brown Decision," *Journal of Southern History* 52 (1986): 43-76; Joann P. Krieg, ed., *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier, President, Statesman* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Medhurst.
143. R. Gordon Hoxie, "Eisenhower and Presidential Leadership," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 13 (1983): 601-2.
  144. Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence: The Regent's Press, 1979), 106, 125.
  145. As Marquis Childs maintains: "Many northern newspapers gave him a measure of praise for having acted to end an intolerable situation. . . . But this was grudging tribute from those who felt that, if only he had acted more quickly, the worst consequences of this shameful episode might have been avoided." Marquis Childs, *Eisenhower: Captive Hero—A Critical Study of the General and the President* (London: Hammond, Hammond and Company, 1959), esp. 224-27; quotation, 226.
  146. Arthur Larson, *Eisenhower: The President Nobody Knew* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1968), 132-33.
  147. Fred I. Greenstein maintains that Eisenhower exercised "hidden-hand leadership," "instrumental use of language," and "selective delegation" in enacting his role as president. Eisenhower strove to create a sense of national unity and to garner respect for the institutional office of the presidency and his role as Chief of State. (See esp. 233-41).
  148. Night Letter from the President to the Honorable Richard B. Russell, Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 23, 27 September 1957, DDE Library.
  149. See Duram, vi; Burk, 153; Barber, 138. Norman Thomas, a syndicated columnist for the *Los Angeles Mirror*, among others, took great exception to Eisenhower's reference to "extremists on both sides" in his depiction of violence and school desegregation. Thomas wrote the president: "Unfortunately that expression is too often understood as apportioning guilt about equally between the aggressive segregationists and the advocates of obedience to the order of the Court." Letter of Norman Thomas to the President, White House Central Files, General File, Box 916, 124-A-1, School Decision (1), DDE Library.
  150. Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos.
  151. For a sample of the international concerns experienced and expressed by both presidents see their respective speech texts. Eisenhower's, of course, is cited herein. Kennedy's is cited in Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos. An interesting example of Eisenhower's concern can be found in the following. At Eisenhower's request, Henry Cabot Lodge outlined his suggestions for international damage control. See Letter to the President from Henry Cabot Lodge, Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 24, Henry Cabot Lodge, 1957-1958 (3), 15 October 1957, DDE Library.
  152. Tony Freyer, *The Little Rock Crisis: A Constitutional Interpretation* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 171-72; block quotation, 172.
  153. Freyer, 173-74.
  154. Michael R. Belknap, *Federal Law and Southern Order: Racial Violence and Constitutional Conflict in the Post-Brown South* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 52.
  155. *Ibid.*, 53, 48.
  156. Milton S. Katz, "E. Frederick [sic] Morrow and Civil Rights in the Eisenhower Administration," *Phylon* 42 (1981): 133-44; see esp. quotation 133 and 138-39.
  157. "The Meaning of Little Rock," *Time* (7 October 1957): 21.